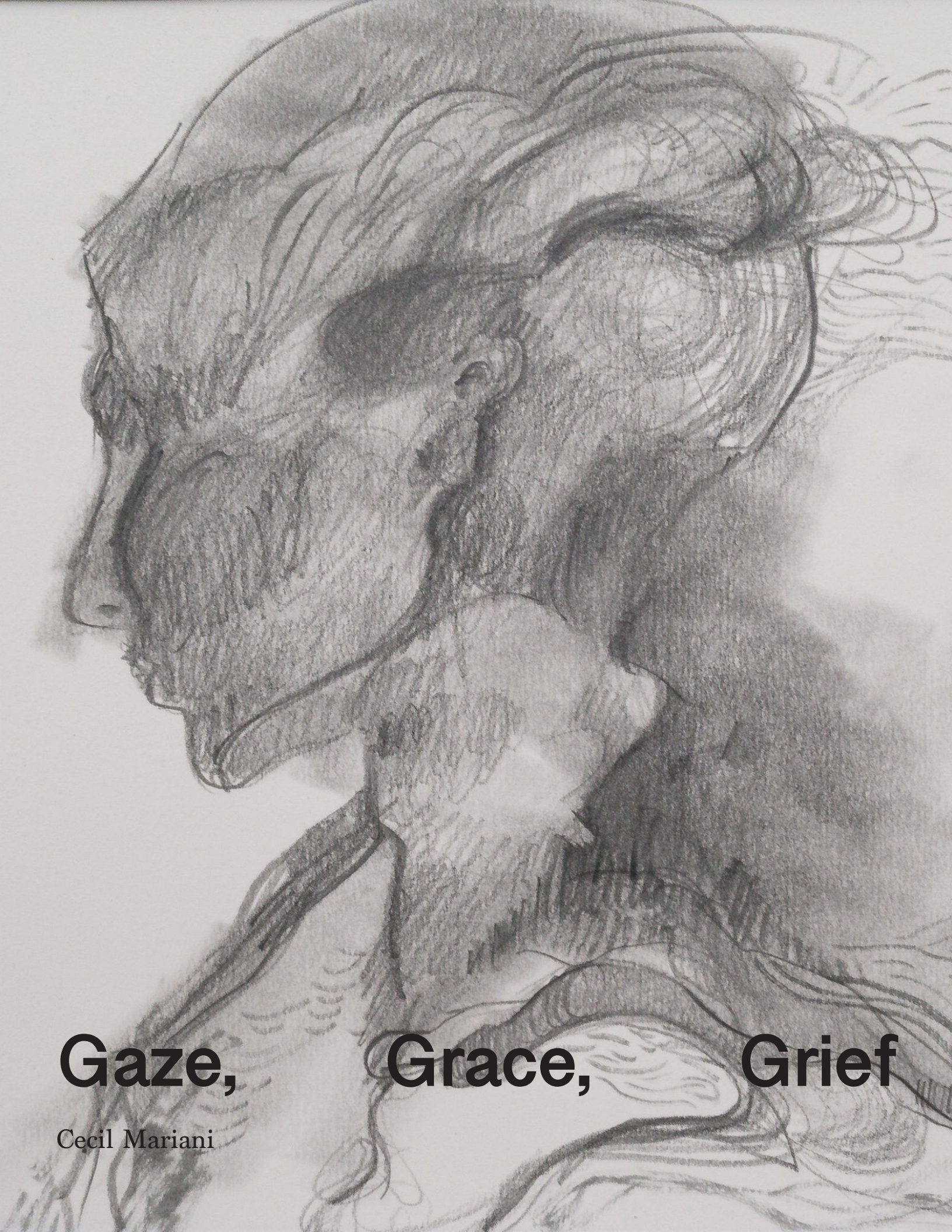


Gaze, Grace, Grief

Cecil Mariani

SOLO EXHIBITION

RUBANAH
underground hub

Gaze, Grace, Grief

Cecil Mariani

Exhibition
24 June — 15 July 2023

Curated by
Grace Samboh
Akmalia Rizqita "Chita"

supported by

.this/PLAY STUDIO
ART AND EXHIBITION DESIGN

Daftar Isi

Pengantar oleh Grace Samboh 1

Foto ruang pamer oleh M. Revaldi 8

Karya-karya Cecil Mariani 10

Foto ruang pamer oleh M. Revaldi 64

Tentang Cecil Mariani 66

Foto ruang pamer oleh M. Revaldi 68

Kolofon 80

Content

Introduction by Grace Samboh 78

Exhibition shot by M. Revaldi 8

Artworks Cecil Mariani 10

Exhibition shot by M. Revaldi 64

About Cecil Mariani 66

Exhibition shot by M. Revaldi 68

Colophon 80

Bercakap di antara, di sekitar, dan bersama gegambaran Cecil Mariani
oleh Akmalia Rizqita "Chita", Grace Samboh,
bersama Lisabona Rahman, Ening Nurjanah, dan (sebut saja) K

[Catatan penulisan]
Naskah ini adalah percakapan antara Chita dan Grace yang menata pameran ini bersama. Naskah ini bertugas mengantar pameran, menemani pemirsa pameran melihat karya. Sembari menata karya, dan membayangkan pengantar apa yang mesti kami berikan atas penataan karya-karya ini, kami meminta sejumlah teman dekat Cecil untuk melihat karya-karya ini bersama kami.

From Popie's to Levant

The texts we used to send each other, every morning, the moments we just woke up:

Q: Wes tangi? (You awake?)
A: Uwes (Yes)
Q: Sarapan yuk? (Breakfast?)
A: - Ok, tak salin sek (Let me change)
- Ok, aku mudun (I'm coming down)

Then we would walk into this small nice breakfast café, in our neighborhood, at Cikini V, under the commuter line railway. A waffle, or a pancake, and an omelet for two. A cup of white coffee for me and a cup of tea for her. Some cigarettes.

These conversations still happen, despite the lesser intensity, the different breakfast places, the different menus. We have arrived at: Two black coffees, one salad Chevre Chaud, Shasouka, some bread. And, no more cigarettes!

From Central to South! Brekky-time with Cecil is always special.

Jakarta, Juni 2023
Ening Nurjanah

[GRS]
Waktu gambar-gambar Cecil tiba dari tempat pemiguraan, aku pikir kita akan harus mengerutkan dahi untuk waktu yang cukup panjang. Sebab kita akan harus memilih: Mana yang mau dipajang? Kenapa? Kenapa tidak? Ada semacam beban tanggung jawab bahwa pilihannya mesti beralasan. Semacam alasan-alasan kuratorial! Haha.

[ARC]
Hal pertama yang tercetus di kepala kita adalah mengelompokkannya berdasarkan ukuran, kesamaan medium, dan warna, untuk kemudian 'disaring'. Begitu melihat bagaimana mereka semua berderet, kita terkagum-kagum sendiri! Selain karena jumlah, konsistensi, dan ketahanan Cecil dalam rutinitasnya menggambar, jadi tampak begitu jelas. Sebagai catatan saja: Masih ada puluhan gambar lagi yang tidak Cecil bawa ke sini!

[GRS]
Kagum! Iya! Banget! Padahal waktu kita mengelompokkan berdasarkan bentuk, kita berpikir tentang pengalaman ruang macam apa yang akan kita bangun untuk pemirsa pameran. Bagaimana karya-karya ini dialami dalam ruang pamer ini, satu per satu, satu di sebelah yang lainnya, sekelompok di seberang kelompok lainnya, dst. Entah deh pikiran-pikiran ini kutukan (karena kita pengelola ruangnya) atau anugerah (karena kita berpihak pada kemungkinan karya bisa dialami dalam kondisi yang tepat). Tapi, apa itu tepat? Kenapa yang ini tepat dan yang itu tidak? *Anyway*, proses pengelompokkan ini kita lakukan tanpa memeriksa judul karya, waktu pembuatan, dst. Jadi, alaminya ya gambar-gambar ini kita susun berdasarkan gradasi warna dan kecenderungan garis. Sebenarnya nyaris seperti bagaimana yang tampak dalam ruang pamer sekarang *sih* ya...

Awalnya, kita pikir kita akan memilih—seperti dugaan banyak orang atas kerja kuratorial, yaitu kerja memilih-milih karya. Semacam satu, dua, atau tiga karya yang mewakili kecenderungan bentuk tertentu. Lalu yang lainnya kita simpan alias tidak kita pajang. Setelah semua karya berjejer, WOW! Seperti yang kamu bilang, Chit, yang langsung kelihatan adalah rutinitas Cecil menggambar. Laku gambar Cecil. Ada semacam ketenangan, kekaleman, atau kelegaan kalau pakai bahasamu ya dari deretan gambar karya ini. Mungkin karena dalam rutinitas ada pola, jadi kita bisa merasa ini nyaman, ini enak, karena kita semacam dibawa ke dalam kesederhanaannya, kebiasaannya... Ada perasaan bahwa ya memang begini alamnya...

[ARC]
Lucunya, gambar-gambar Cecil juga menggiring kita untuk mencoba kebebasan yang lain. Baru kali ini kan kita menata karya di RUBANAH dengan melewati batas khayal yang kita ciptakan sendiri. Kali ini kita tidak menyikapi pilar dan kolom di ruangan ini sebagai 'pembatas ruang', laiknya panel-panel yang umumnya kita temukan di ruang pamer lain. Dinding RUBANAH kita sikapi dengan terkotak-kotak, gitu. Pilar dan kolom menjadi semacam batasannya.

[GRS]
Sering banget ya kita bikin-bikin batasan sendiri, terus menuduh sekolah, teori, keilmuan, disiplin, industri, modernitas, atau mazhab-mazhab apalah sebagai sesuatu yang membatasi kita! Haha. Lalu kita seolah bekerja untuk mencapai kebebasan. Padahal, bebas itu (bisa juga) *state of mind!* Kenapa juga kita percaya sama batas-batasnya dari awal? Siapa juga yang memaksa kita mengakui atau percaya sama batas-batas itu?

Kebanyakan dari kita mengenal Cecil dengan "topinya" yang berbeda-beda. Ia seorang perancang grafis, mengajar di Institut Kesenian Jakarta, ikut mendirikan dan aktif dalam berbagai lembaga antara lain: Sekolah Pemikiran Perempuan, kolektif pekerja di industri media dan kreatif Serikat SINDIKASI, Prakerti Collective Intelligence—sebuah pelantar kooperatif yang menjembatani antara kerja akademik, bisnis, dan aktivisme, dan Dewan Kesenian Jakarta (2020-2023). Karena peran (maka tanggung jawab) sosial yang sederet itu, jadi "mudah" buat kita bilang bahwa pada gambar-gambar ini, Cecil bebas...

[ARC]
Sebagai seorang perancang grafis, dan juga organisatoris, Cecil terbiasa melangkah dengan metodik; meneliti, mengukur, menata, menimbang, dst. Pekerjaannya selalu berhadapan dengan ekspektasi dan kebutuhan orang lain. Pada gambar-gambarnya, ia melepas kebiasaan-kebiasaan tersebut. Ia menggambar untuk kemaslahatan dirinya, dan kita bisa merasakan kelegaan itu. Perasaan lega sepertinya dari situ—dari kebebasan Cecil dari laku kerjanya yang lain. Dan, bahwa laku gambar adalah sesuatu yang sehari-hari bagi Cecil, setidaknya belakangan ini...

[GRS]
"Lega" bukan kata kunci yang sering kita pakai dalam membicarakan karya pada umumnya. Kenapa ya kata itu muncul dari memandang, menikmati, dan menata karya Cecil? Kalau membicarakan gambar kita kan akan bicara tentang garis, figur atau karakter, ... Kalaupun membicarakan perasaan-perasaan, emosi-emosi, yang muncul biasanya amarah, getir, galau, atau, pada sisi yang lain, indah, erotis, seksi, halus... Apalagi, karena pilihan medium dan cara mengaplikasikan alat gambarnya, rasanya akan mudah menganggap karya Cecil ini gelap, pekat, maka galau, kelam, dst.

Rutinitas menggambar, laku gambar Cecil, kita upayakan hadir dalam ruang pamer dengan memajang karya berdempetan dalam jumlah sebanyak ini. Aku sih jadi merasa perlu bertanya-tanya lagi mengenai kegelapan itu. Apakah dia kesan saja, karena gambarnya menggunakan arang atau alat gambar yang hitam maka dia serta-merta gelap? Kalau kita melihat garis-garisnya, bukan warnanya, bukankah kita dihadapkan dengan keluwesan? Bahkan, keyakinan. Sebab garis-garis Cecil seolah selalu tahu arah perjalanannya. "Aku gambar mengikuti garis," kata Cecil. Siapa garis? Mau apa garis? Bisa juga kita anggap, itu tergantung Cecil atau siapapun yang menorehkan garisnya. Pernyataan singkat Cecil itu, menurut saya, bisa juga berarti ia tidak punya cita-cita, apalagi ambisi. Ia menggambar untuk menggambar, bukan untuk menghadirkan citraan yang mewakili satu gagasan tertentu.

Pada *mother to mother: haptic kinesthesia* (2023), ada dua orang yang membelakangi satu sama lain, wajah mereka saling menghindar, acuh... Gambar ini membawa saya pada kesan pertama saya melihat karya Cecil adalah gambaran emosinya yang sangat kuat. Di Galeri Kertas, pada 2018, saya terpukau dengan gambar Cecil yang goresannya didominasi warna hitam pekat. Waktu itu, saya pikir hitam pekat ini sangatlah kelam. Dalam kondisi emosi saya sekarang, saya ingin menikmati karya Cecil. Saya ingin mengambil alih kekelaman hitam pekat dalam gambar-gambar Cecil.

Di kehidupan yang mudah membuat kita menjadi ragu, marah, atau mungkin lupa menghargai yang kita miliki, menurut saya, gambar-gambar Cecil adalah pengingat bahwa kita masih memiliki hati, dengan segala bentuk proses emosinya. Cecil menggambar saat hatinya sedang kosong, sedih, marah, ragu, bahagia, atau sekadar mengisi waktu luangnya. Bukan karena ia merasa harus berkarya. Saya salut dengan cara bekerja Cecil yang sangat rajin mengekspresikan gejolak emosinya, merekamnya. Entah ketelatenan ini disengaja Cecil atau tidak, yang pasti, menurut saya, gambar-gambar ini bisa mewakili kondisi emosi banyak orang, seperti yang saya alami. Kalaupun tiba-tiba ia terhenti, ia juga akan dengan ringan menyudahi kegiatan menggambarnya. Oleh karena itu, pada beberapa gambarnya, ada kesan tidak selesai. Saya pikir, ini justru menjadi estetika Cecil.

Jakarta, Juni 2023
(sebut saja) K

[ARC]
Gambar Cecil lokasinya antah berantah, figur-figur ataupun wujud-wujudnya tak bernama, bahkan sering kali tidak jelas makhluk apa—walau kita mungkin segera melihatnya sebagai manusia. Potongan-potongan tubuh bertumpuk, helai-helai rambut tersibak, mereka seolah sedang bergerak... Tunggu, tunggu. Sebelum kita bahas gambar per gambar, mungkin kita bisa mulai dari gambar sebagai laku yang dipilih Cecil. Ada kesegeraan *(immediacy)* dalam gambar yang nyaman bagi Cecil. Dalam prosesnya, ketertarikan Cecil pada material juga mendorongnya untuk menggambar—kesukaannya pada tekstur dan warna papan yang ia gunakan untuk karya-karya *silver shadow series* (2022) dan *yellow shadow series* (2022) yang digantung di ruang pamer ini, misalnya. Juga transparansi tinta, kekaburan pastel, intensitas arang... Keluwesannya dalam mengendalikan alat-alat gambarnya ini membuat penampilan gambarnya sering mengecoh kita. Aku *sih* sering penasaran, ini pakai apa ya?

Pada karya *grieving path series 2: Dear, Amygdala* (2023) misalnya, sekilas aku kira pensil, ternyata Cecil menggunakan tinta warna hitam yang dicampur air sehingga warnanya menjadi keabuan dan cenderung transparan. Kita sempat mengira karya berjudul *coastal kinesthesia* (2023) digambar menggunakan spidol, ternyata tinta. Begitu pula dengan karya-karya yang memiliki elemen-elemen warna kuning dan merah muda (sebenarnya magenta) yang kita kira cat air, ternyata juga tinta.

[GRS]
Bagian-bagian yang Chita bilang “aku kira” itu seru buat aku yang tidak punya praktik menggambar—ya, ya, aku setuju semua orang bisa menggambar, tapi bukan berarti dia serta-merta jadi praktik, apalagi kemampuan yang menubuh dalam setiap orang, kan? Hehe.

[ARC]
Iya, kan? Gambar-gambar Cecil mengingatkanku pada orat-oret *(doodle)* yang sering kulakukan kalau sedang merenung. Aku jadi berpikir, betapa tidak mudahnya untuk benar-benar menggambar tanpa merancang seperti yang dilakukan Cecil. Kebanyakan orang menggambar dengan rancangan atau tujuan yang jelas di kepalanya, maka ia bisa salah atau benar, selesai atau tidak selesai. Kalau sedang membahas praktik seniman, kadang kita juga tergiur untuk memisah-misah mereka jadi ‘fase’ atau ‘periode’ gitu, kan. Sementara, Cecil bisa dengan ringan kembali ke suatu gambar yang sempat ia selesaikan—atau mungkin lebih tepatnya, ia berhenti mengerjakannya—lalu ia tambahkan beberapa elemen, kemudian ia lanjut ke gambar lainnya, atau memulai gambar yang baru sama sekali dengan medium yang berbeda. Semuanya dikerjakan beriringan. Untuk bisa menggambar seperti Cecil, perlu kepekaan yang hadirnya dari pengalaman menggambar seumur hidup, dan belum tentu semua orang bisa mencapainya.

[GRS]
Dalam pameran ini ada dua gambar yang cenderung berbeda karena mediumnya. Secara perilaku, secara pembuatan, dua-duanya tetap gambar *sih*. Pertama yang digambar Cecil di atas papan gips dan, kedua, yang dicetak. *weeping in plain public* (2020) digambar Cecil di Pasar Seni Ancol di hadapan pemirsa yang berakhir-pekan di pantai utara Jakarta yang panas itu. Pada satu bagian gambarnya, Cecil membiarkan seorang pemirsanya untuk ikut menggambar bersamanya. Mulanya, pemirsa ini bertanya pada Cecil, “Apa makna di balik gambarmu?” Cecil balik bertanya, “Menurutmu apa?” Makna, maksud, cerita memang bukan awalan dari laku gambar Cecil—penulisan judul, atau kala diminta berkisah mengenai gambarnya, sikap yang diambilnya adalah *retroactive*, ia menjadi pemirsa dari karyanya, kemudian membangun kisah dari apa yang tampak dan kelindannya dengan pengalamannya saat menggambar.

Dari peristiwa ini, dan kenyataan bahwa Cecil memajang karya ini di rumahnya, kemudian membawanya ke ruang pamer, aku ingin menggarisbawahi keringanan sekaligus kesantunan laku gambar Cecil. Rutin, iya. Ritual(istik), iya. Tapi tidak perlu dalam kesendirian. Proses cetak batu (*lithography*) memungkinkan Cecil menggambar dengan cara yang sama dengan caranya biasa menggambar, dengan alat beragam bentuk arang, tinta dan kuas, berikut dengan caranya menggaris dengan alat-alat tsb—bedanya hanya untuk *limestone* dalam cetak batu, alat gambarnya berbasis minyak. Pada catatan karya ini, Cecil berterimakasih kepada Devi Febrianto, Johana Dewa, tim studio Defto Printmaking, Ening Nurjanah, dan Goenawan Mohamad. Ketiga yang pertama memungkinkan kerja cetak yang bukan semata kerja tangan seseorang di atas kertas. Kedua yang terakhir, Ening dan GM, memfasilitasi kelengkapan yang dibutuhkan Cecil untuk menguji medium baru ini.

Secara teknis, *dark at the rim of language* (2023) bermula dari kerja yang sama saja dengan kerja menggambar Cecil. Bedanya, perlu ada *limestone*, alat gambarnya, dan mesin cetaknya. Jadi, sekalipun gambarnya dibuat dalam proses yang sudah menubuh pada Cecil—karena ia menggambar sejak kecil—, ritualnya berbeda. Kalau biasanya Cecil pilah-pilah kertas, beli alat gambar yang mau digunakan atau diuji-cobakan sendiri, mencari meja, lalu menggambar sambil ”asyik sendiri”, kali ini, selain pada saat menggambar, semua tahapannya butuh peran orang lain. Dalam kerja Cecil yang lain, sebagai perancang grafis, sebagai dosen, sebagai organisatoris, ia terbiasa bekerja dengan banyak orang. Karya cetak batu ini bisa kita lihat sebagai sebuah peristiwa dimana Cecil menjalankan laku menggambarnya dengan orang lain, sekaligus sambutan orang lain terhadapnya.

catatan pendek buat kawan C

aku sungguh ikut senang melihat pameranmu menjelang

terakhir kita bisa bicara berdua
semua-semua mampat, menghimpit
persis seperti lalu lintas macet yang menjebak kita sore itu

’di mana kamu merasa paling lega?’ tanyaku
’waktu bisa menggambar.’ katamu

aku sungguh ikut senang melihat pameranmu menjelang
semoga ruangmu terus melapang, pikiranmu tenang

Berlin, Juni 2023
Lisabona Rahman

Weeping in plain public
2020
Charcoal and acrylic on gipsum
104 x 83 cm each (diptych)

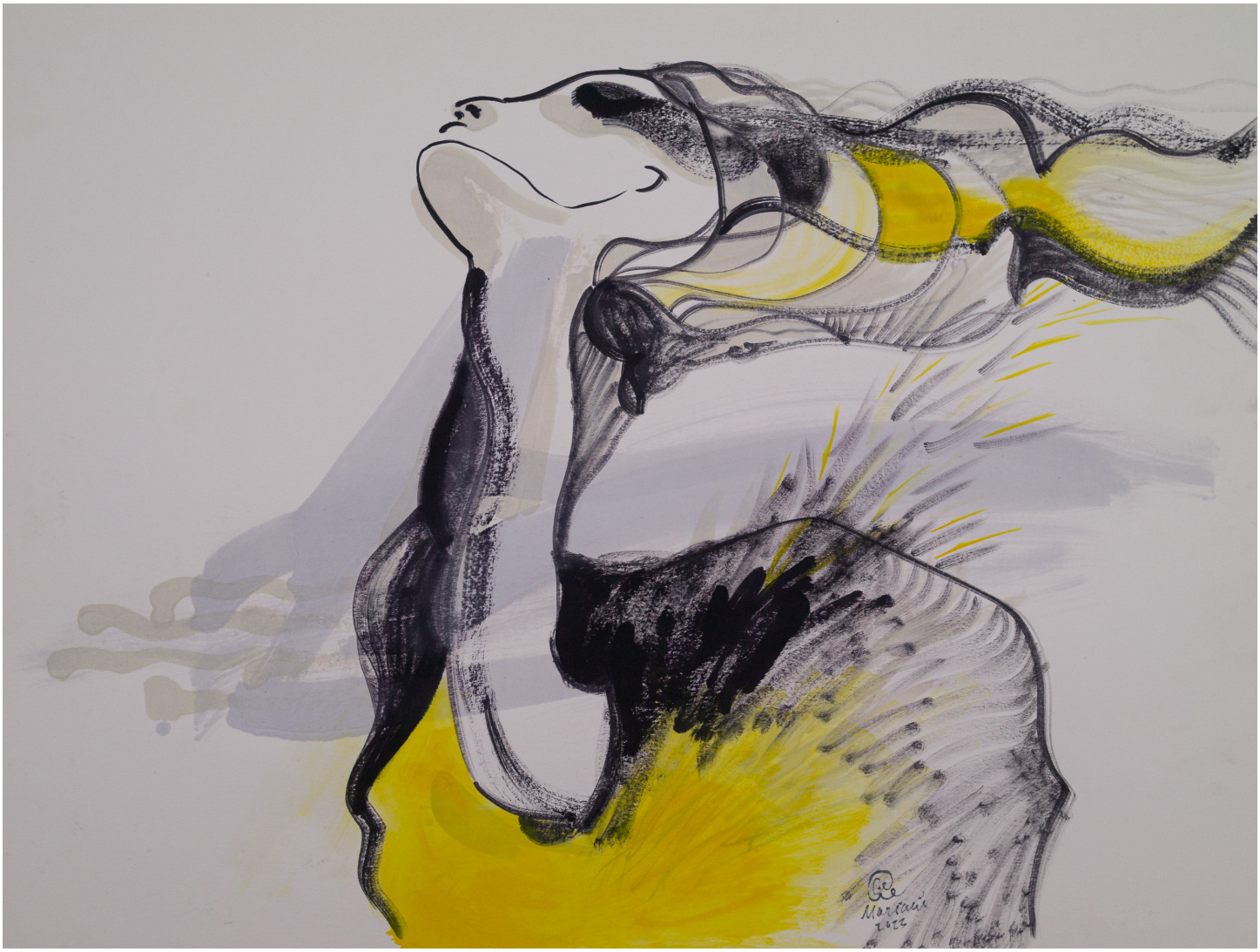
Kinesthesia of second guessing
2023
Charcoal and ink pigment on 570gsm paperboard
60 x 80 cm

Grieving path series 2
2023
Chrome, acrylic, charcoal and pastel on 500gsm paperboard
60 x 80 cm

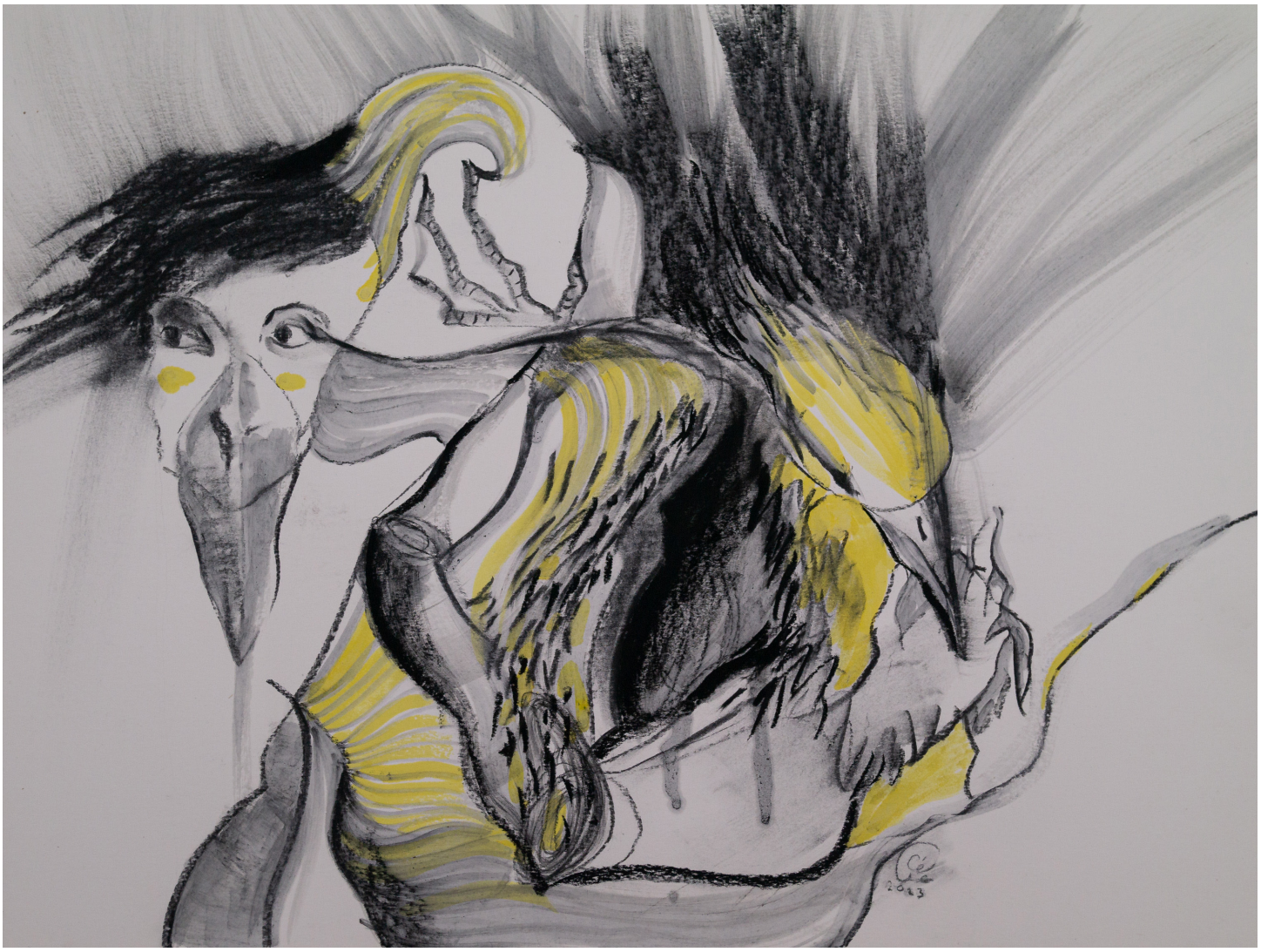
Domestic ferals
2023
Charcoal and ink pigment on 500gsm paperboard
60 x 80 cm

Feral haptic contract
2023
Charcoal and ink pigment on paperboard
60 x 80 cm

Four domestically ferals
2023
Charcoal and ink pigment on paperboard
60 x 80 cm



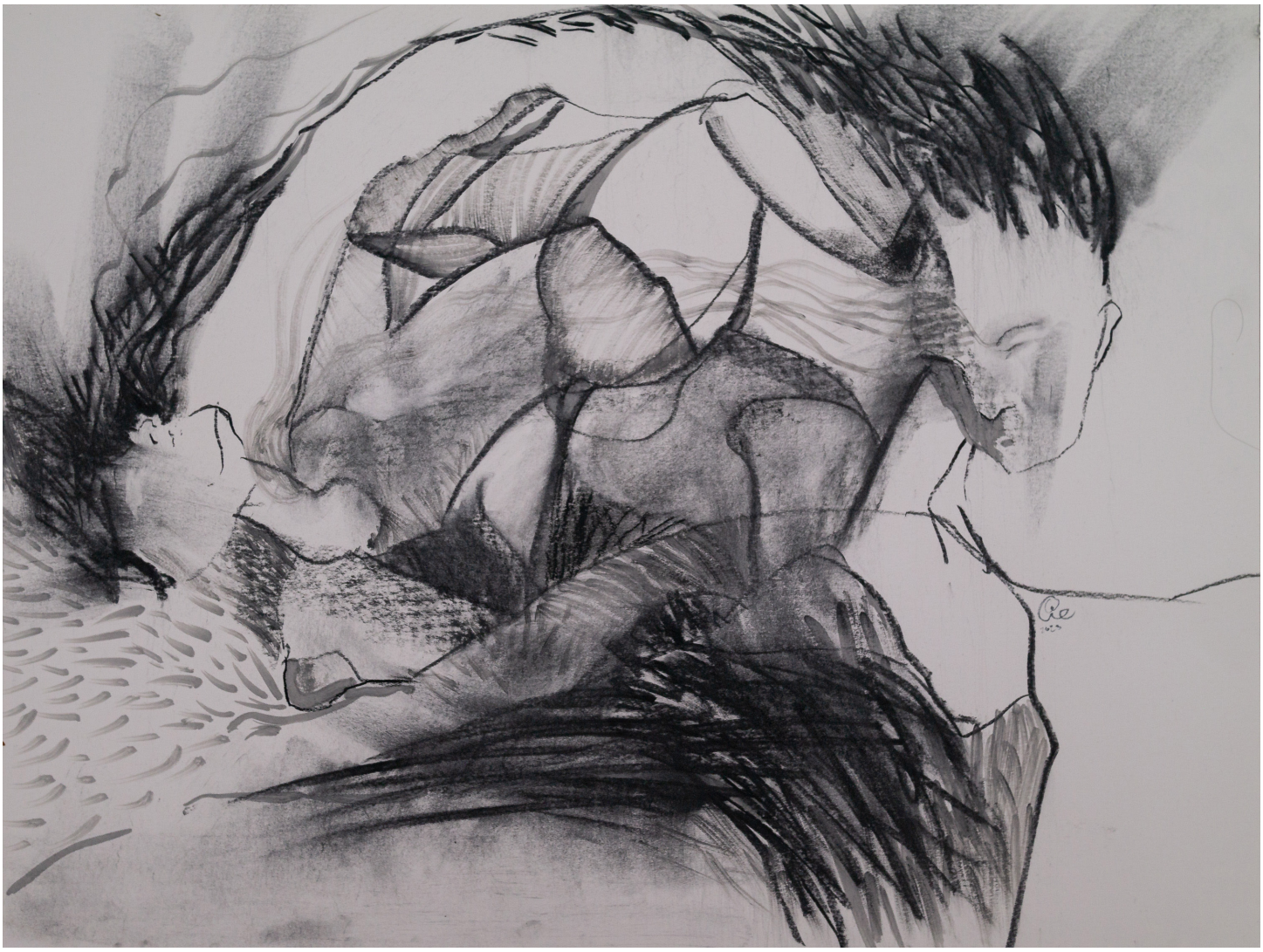
Grieving path series 2: the yellow kinesthesis
2023
Inkbrush on paper
60 x 80 cm



To be domesticated is to be feral
2023
Charcoal and ink pigment on paperboard
60 x 80 cm

Grieving path series 2: no scorned kinesthesia
2023
Charcoal and ink pigment on paperboard
60 x 80 cm

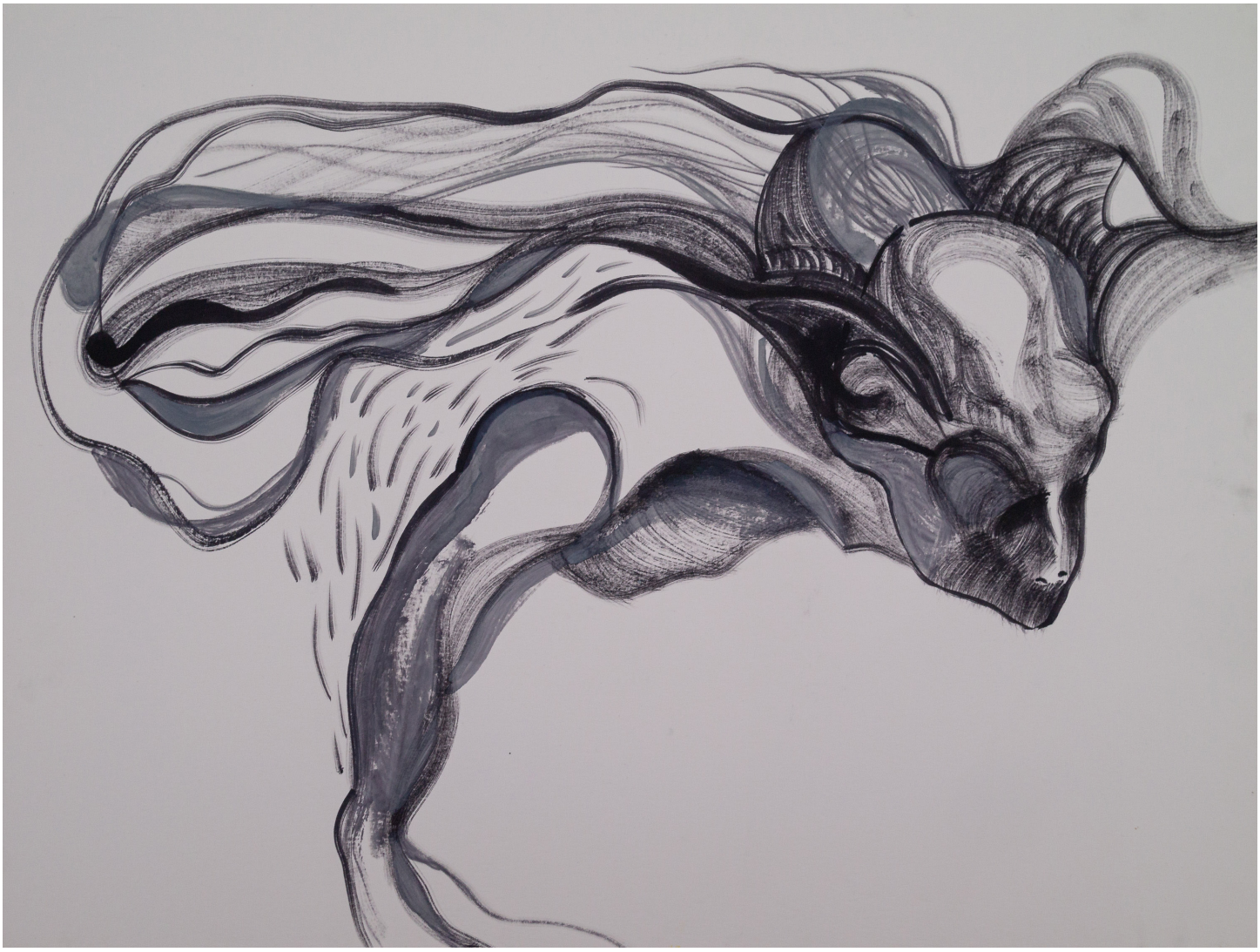
Feral oddkin domestic
2023
Charcoal and ink pigment on paperboard
60 x 80 cm



Feral domestics
2023
Charcoal and ink pigment on paperboard
60 x 80 cm

Grieving path series 2: earthen haptic kinesthetic
2023
Charcoal and ink pigment on paper
60 x 80 cm

Grieving path series 2: Padang Galak haptic 2
2023
Inkbrush on paper
60 x 80 cm



Grieving path series 2: ether haptic kinesthesia
2023
Ink on soft board paper
60 x 80 cm

Mother to mother: haptic kinesthesia
2023
Charcoal and ink pigment on 570gsm paperboard
60 x 80 cm

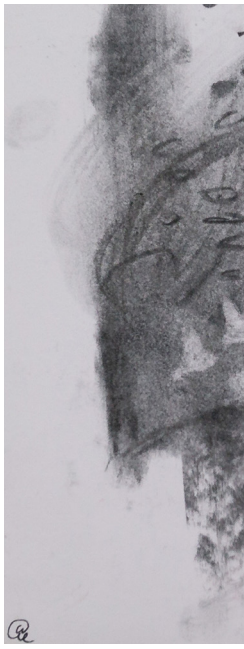
Grieving path series 2: *masuk angin merah abu* / back stiffness in madder wind
2023
Ink pigment, charcoal and ink pigment on paperboard
60 x 80 cm

Grieving path series 2: the skin and the sea kinesthetic field
2023
Ink pigments on paperboard
60 x 80 cm

Kinesthetic pink
2023
Ink pigment on paperboard
60 x 80 cm

Coastal kinesthetic
2023
Ink on 570 gsm paperboard
60 x 80 cm

Dark at the rim of language
2023
Lithography on cotton paper
50 x 70 cm
2 ed. + 1 AP



Crimson phantom series
2022
Charcoal, ink andpastel on paper
7 x 10 cm

Grieving path series 2: Dear, Amygdala
2023
Inkbrush on paper
21 x 29,7 cm

Olfactory praying
2023
Charcoal and inkbrush on paper
21 x 29.7 cm

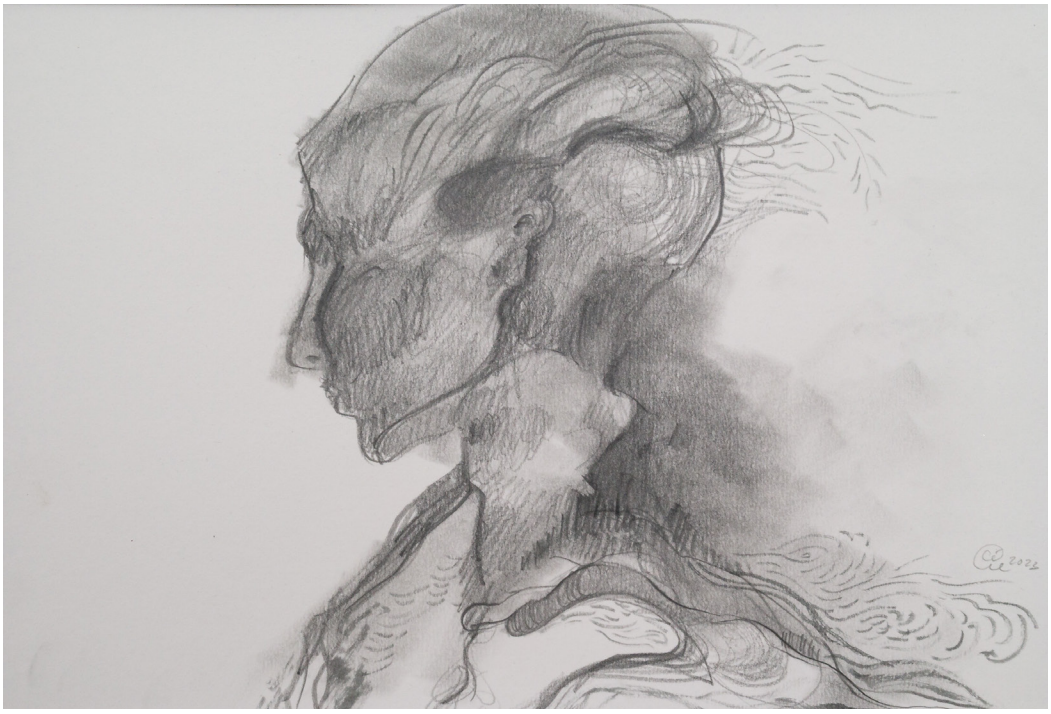
Grieving path series 2: hair shedding prayers
2023
Charcoal nudge and inkbrush on paper
21 x 29,7 cm

Grieving path series 2: olfactory prayers
2023
Charcoal on paper
21 x 29,7 cm

Grieving path series 2: olfactory praying
2023
Charcoal on paper
21 x 29,7 cm

Grieving path series 2: memory rippling and shedding
2023
Chrome, acrylic, charcoal and pastel on paper
21 x 29,7 cm

Grieving path series 2: muscle memory loss and gain
2023
Charcoal on paper
21 x 29,7 cm



Skin shedding prayers
2023
Charcoal pencil on paper
21 x 29,7 cm

One domestically feral
2023
Charcoal on paper
21 x 29.7 cm

Grieving path series 2: kinesthetic yellow
2023
Charcoal and pastel on paper
30 x 40 cm

Fear kinesthesia
2023
Charcoal and pastel on paper
30 x 40 cm

Grieving path series 2: kinesthetic yellow
2023
Charcoal and pastel on paper
30 x 40 cm

Grieving path series 2: kinesthetic yellow
2023
Charcoal and pastel on paper
30 x 40 cm

Grieving path series 2: no green heron on xeno-migration
2023
Charcoal pencil on paper
21 x 29,7 cm

Rippling motors, lash, and seawater
2023
Charcoal and inkbrush on paper
21 x 29,7 cm

Coastal kinesthesia
2023
Charcoal and ink pigment on paperboard
60 x 80 cm

Grieving path series 2: sheltering haptic kin
2023
Charcoal and ink pigment on paper
60 x 80 cm

Grief grace kinesthesis
2023
Ink pigments on paperboard
60 x 80 cm

Grieving path series 2: caustic selves
2023
Charcoal and ink pigment on paperboard
60 x 80 cm

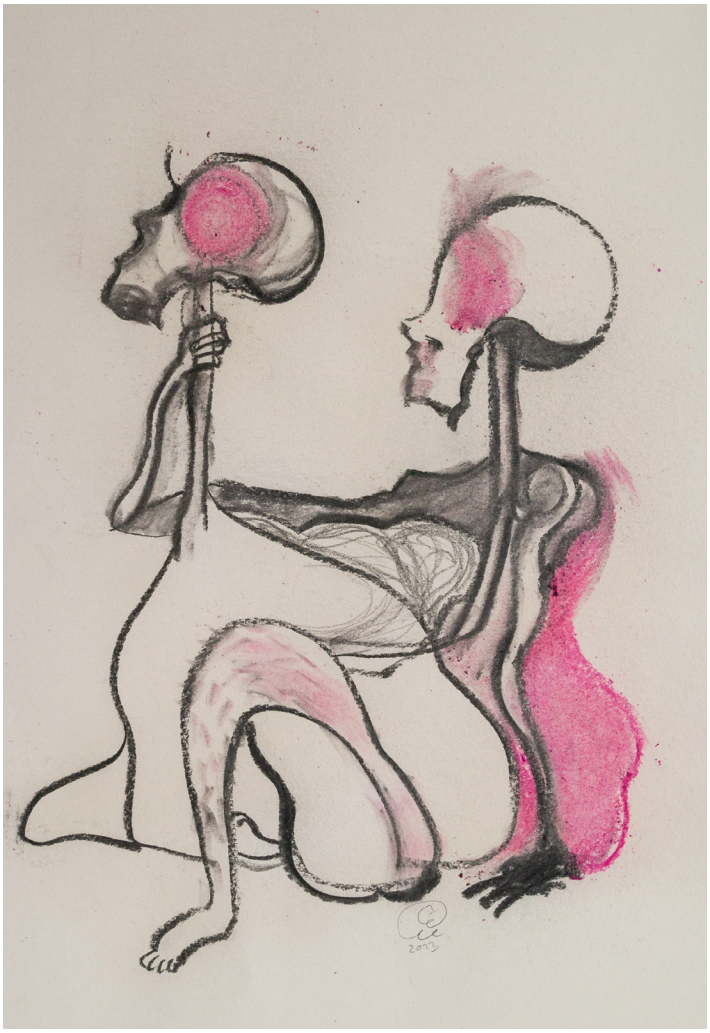
Grieving path series: gazing up for xeno-migration
2023
Charcoal on paper
30 x 40 cm

Grieving path series: the feral lights at Padang Galak
2023
Charcoal on paper
30 x 40 cm

Grieving path series: Padang Galak kinesthesia
2023
Charcoal on paper
30 x 40 cm

Grieving path series
2023
Charcoal on paper
30 x 40 cm

Grieving path series: Padang Galak haptic
2023
Charcoal on paper
30 x 40 cm

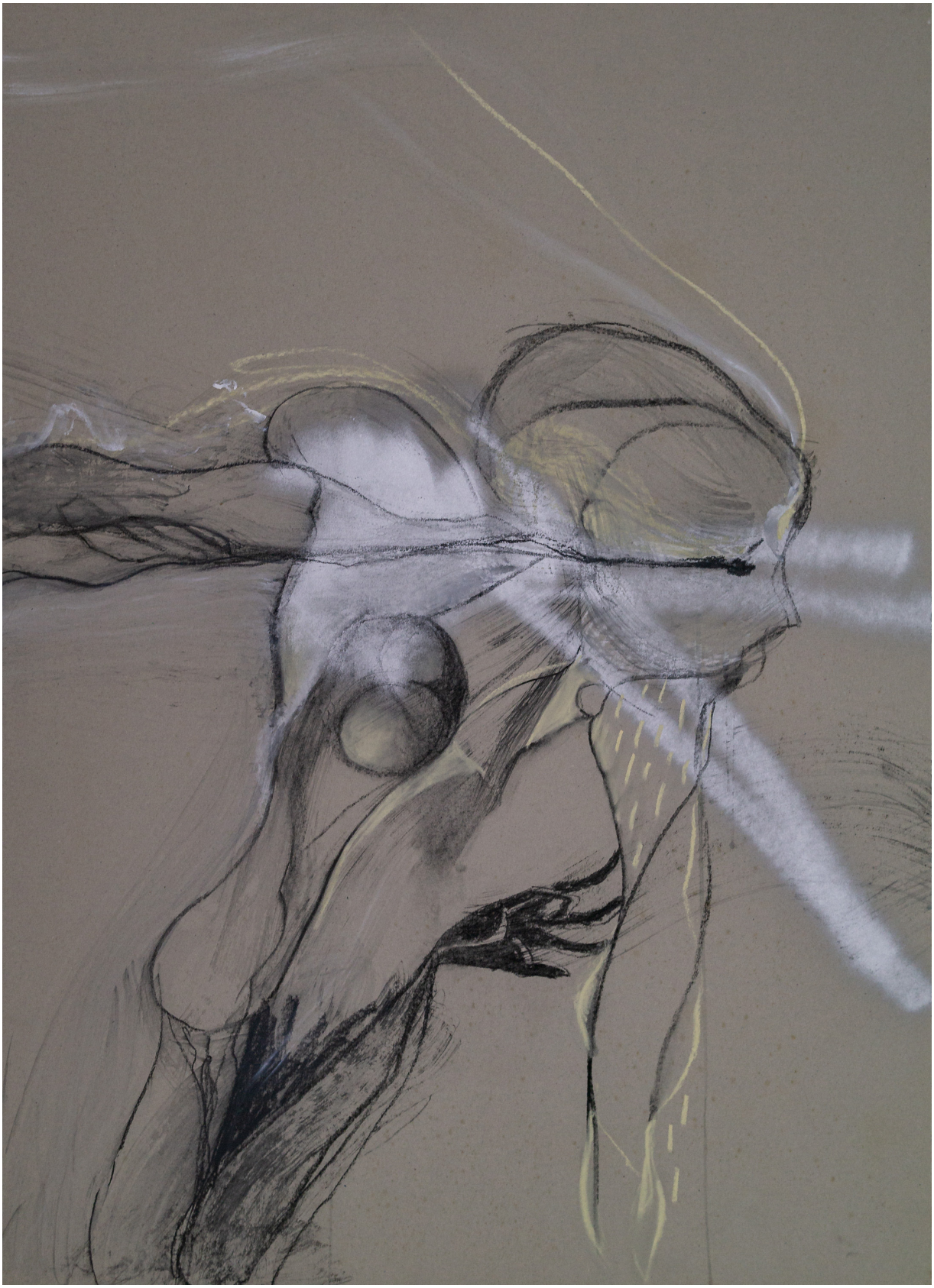


Kinesthetic pink 1
2023
Charcoal and pastel on paper
30 x 40 cm

Kinesthetic pink 2
2023
Charcoal and pastel on paper
30 x 40 cm

Kinesthetic pink 3
2023
Charcoal and pastel on paper
30 x 40 cm

Kinesthesis pink 4
2023
Charcoal and pastel on paper
30 x 40 cm



Silver shadow series
2022
Chrome, acrylic, charcoal and pastel on board
80 x 110 cm

Silver shadow series
2022
Chrome, acrylic, charcoal and pastel on board
80 x 110 cm

Yellow shadow series
2022
Chrome, acrylic, charcoal and pastel on board
110 x 80 cm

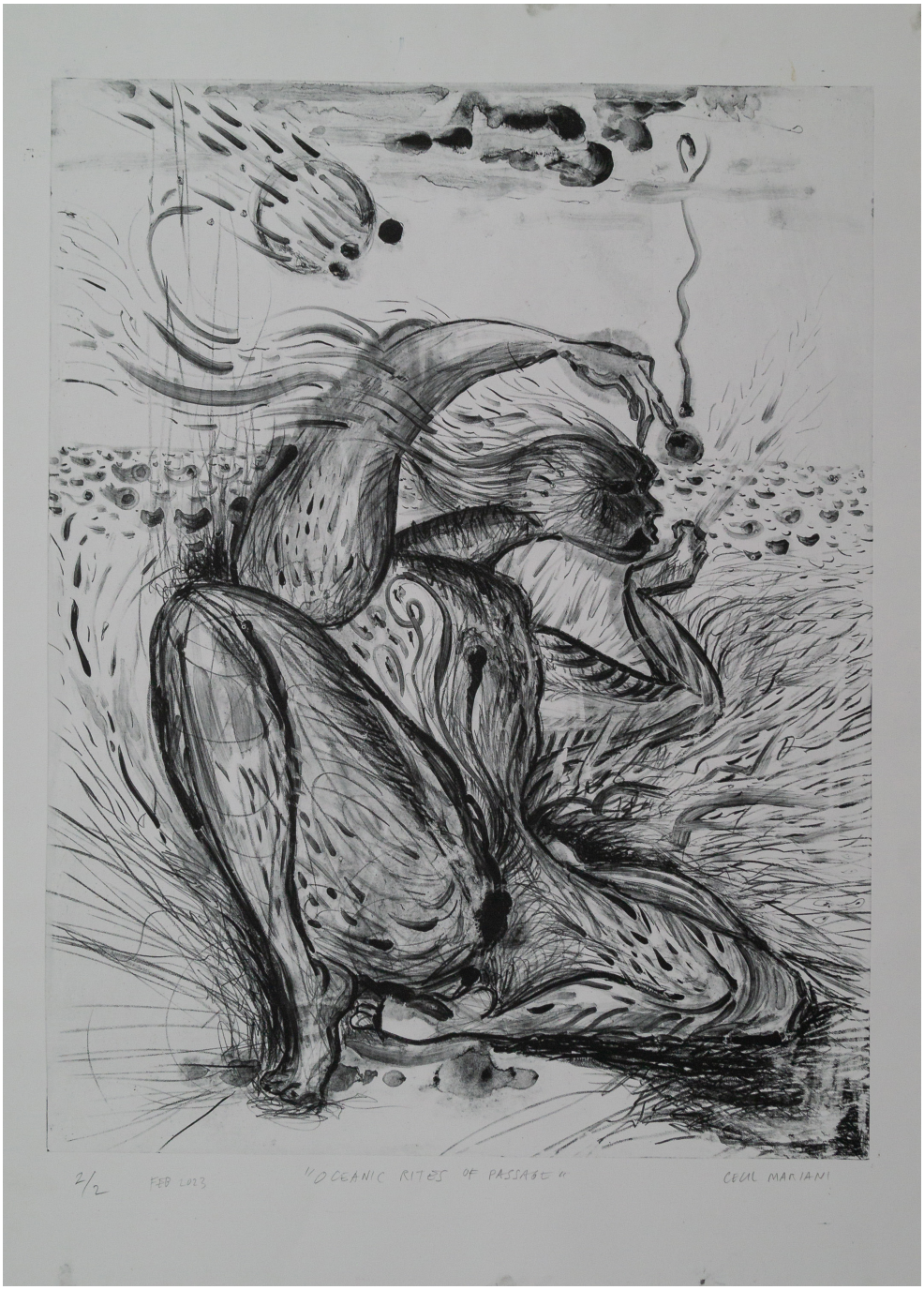
Silver shadow series
2022
Chrome, acrylic, charcoal and pastel on board
80 x 110 cm

Yellow shadow series
2022
Chrome, acrylic, charcoal and pastel on board
80 x 110 cm

Silver shadow series
2022
Chrome, acrylic, charcoal and pastel on board
80 x 110 cm

Yellow shadow series
2022
Chrome, acrylic, charcoal and pastel on board
80 x 110 cm

Silver shadow series
2022
Chrome, acrylic, charcoal and pastel on board
80 x 110 cm



Oceanic rites of passage
2023
Lithography on cotton paper
50 x 70 cm
2 ed. + 1 AP

Cecil Mariani (b. 1978, Jakarta) is an artist, designer, lecturer, curator and researcher. Her practice combines aspects of academic work, art and design, questioning the productive and reproductive, the visible and invisible as well as the problems of organization.

Her work has been exhibited widely, including the 2021 Jakarta Biennale "ESOK", and a solo exhibition at Galeri Kertas (Jakarta) in 2018. Cecil was also involved in a number of significant arts organizations in Jakarta, such as the Jakarta Arts Council (2020-2023, Board Member) and Komunitas Salihara (2008-2011), as well as being the founder of Prakerti Academy and Prakerti Collective Intelligence.

She received her Master's Degree at the School of Visual Arts, New York in 2013, partially funded by the independent scholarship initiative that she founded with Lisabona Rahman and Felencia Hutabarat. As an academic, she lectures at the Master's programme at the Institute of the Arts, Jakarta. Cecil is also the Principal Designer at Mariani Witabora.

Conversing among, around, and with Cecil Mariani's drawings

by Akmalia Rizqita "Chita", Grace Samboh,
with Lisabona Rahman, Ening Nurjanah, and (let's just call them) K

[About this text]
This text contains conversations between Chita and Grace who arranged and displayed Cecil's works together. The text is tasked with introducing the exhibition, accompanying the audience as they view the works. As they arranged the artworks, and imagining what kind of "introduction" ought to be delivered alongside the display, we asked several of Cecil's best friends to look at the works with us.

From Popie's to Levant

The texts we used to send each other, every morning, the moments we just woke up:

Q: Wes tangi? (You awake?)
A: Uwes (Yes)
Q: Sarapan yuk? (Breakfast?)
A: - Ok, tak salin sek (Let me change)
- Ok, aku mudun (I'm coming down)

Then we would walk into this small nice breakfast café, in our neighbourhood, at Cikini V, under the commuter line railway. A waffle, or a pancake, and an omelette for two. A cup of white coffee for me and a cup of tea for her. Some cigarettes.

These conversations still happen, despite the lesser intensity, the different breakfast places, the different menus. We have arrived at: Two black coffees, one salad Chevre Chaud, Shasouka, some bread. And, no more cigarettes!

From Central to South! Brekky-time with Cecil is always special.

Jakarta, June 2023
Ening Nurjanah

[GRS]
When Cecil's drawings came from the framers', I thought we would be frowning over them for a long time. Because we'd have to choose: Which do we put on display? Why? Why not? There's a kind of burden to give justify over our choices. Curatorial justifications! Haha.

[ARC]
The first thing that came to our minds was to group them according to size, similarity of medium, and colour, to then be 'filtered'. When we saw them in a row, we were blown away! Not only due to the quantity, consistency, and Cecil's perseverance with her drawing routine, all became so visible. As a side note: There are dozens of other drawings that Cecil didn't bring over here!

[GRS]
Blown away! Yes! Completely! Even when we were grouping them according to form, we also thought about what kind of spatial experience we'd to build for the audience. How would the works are experienced inside the exhibition space, one by one, one next to the other, as a group across another group, and so on. I'm not sure whether these thoughts are a curse (since we are the organisers of the space) or a blessing (as we are positioned to put the works in it's best condition possible). But, what is "best"? Why is this the "best" and not other? Anyway, the process of grouping the works was done without checking the title of the works, the year of making, and so forth. So, naturally, these drawings are arranged based on colour gradation and the tendencies of the line. In fact, this is almost exactly how it is now in the exhibition space, isn't it...

Initially, we thought we were going to select – as commonly expected from curatorial work, which is the labour of selecting artworks. As in selecting one, two or three works that represent a particular tendency of form. And the rest we put in storage, as in not displayed. After all the work is lined up, WOW! Like you said, Chit, what immediately became so apparent was how routinely Cecil draws. Her practice of drawing. There is a kind of calm, serenity, or relief if you use your words, that we can see from the works. Maybe because in routines patterns emerge, so we become comfortable, this is nice, because we are drawn into its simplicity, its habits... There is a feeling that this is really its nature...

[ARC]
Curiously, Cecil's drawings also brought us to try new types of freedom. This is the first time that we displayed artworks in RUBANAH beyond the imagined limits that we made ourselves. This time we don't see pillars and columns within the space as 'partitions', as we do with other panels that we usually find in other exhibition spaces. We treat RUBANAH's walls as boxes, if you will. Pillar and columns become a kind of border.

[GRS]
So often we create these limitations, then put the blame on school, theory, knowledge, discipline, industry, modernity or whatever kind of 'school of thought' that acts as a kind of boundary! Haha. Then we work as if to achieve some kind of freedom. Instead, to be free (may be) a state of mind! Why even believe in those boundaries in the first place? Does anyone force us to acknowledge or believe in those boundaries?

Many of us know Cecil as wearing many different "hats". She's a graphic designer, teaches at the Institute of the Arts Jakarta, involved in the founding and activities of different kinds of organisations such as: School of Women's Thought, a collective for workers in the media and creative industries SINDIKASI, Prakerti Collective Intelligence – a cooperative platform that bridges between academic work, business, activism, and Jakarta Arts Council (2020-2023). Because of all these social roles (and responsibilities), it becomes 'easy' for us to say that in these drawings, Cecil is free...

[ARC]
As a graphic designer, and an organiser, Cecil is used to a methodical approach: researching, measuring, arranging, considering, and so on. Her work always encounters others' expectations and needs. In her drawings, she lets go of these habits. She draws for her own benefit, and we can sense that relief. This sense of relief seems to come from there – from the freedom to act unlike in her other roles. And her drawing practice seems to be something that is part of her daily life, at least lately...

[GRS]
'Relief' is not a keyword that we often use when we talk about artworks in general. Why does this word come up from looking at, enjoying, and arranging Cecil's work? When we talk about drawing we would talk about lines, figures, characters... When we talk about feelings and emotions, what should come up would be anger, bitterness, anxieties, or on the other side of the scale, beauty, eroticism, sexy, gentle... Especially since the choice of medium and the way to apply her drawing tools, it would seem a step away from perceiving Cecil's works as dark, gloomy, depressing, and as such.

The routine of drawing, Cecil's drawing practice, we have attempted to present them in the exhibition space by displaying the works closely side-by-side quite a lot. I feel like I need to question the idea of 'darkness' itself. Is it merely an impression, since the works use charcoal or drawing tools that are black in colour and immediately be seen as dark? If we follow the lines, and not the colour, aren't we faced with a certain grace? Even, conviction. Because it's as if Cecil's lines always know where they are meant to go. "I draw following the lines," Cecil said. Why lines? What do they want? We can also think that it's up to Cecil or whomever drew the line. Cecil's short statement, in my opinion, can also mean that she doesn't have any particular goal, let alone ambitions. She draws to draw, not to present images that stand for any specific ideas.

> In *mother to mother: haptic kinesthesia* (2023), there are two people standing back against each other, their faces avoiding the other, disinterested... This drawing takes me to one of the first impressions of seeing Cecil's work, about how fiercely emotional they are. At Galeri Kertas, in 2018, I was amazed by Cecil's drawings that were dominated by strokes of an intensely black colour. Then, I thought this deep black was incredibly morose. In my current emotional state, I want to enjoy Cecil's works. I was to move away from the darkness of the use of black as a colour in Cecil's drawings.

In life, where we are often doubtful, angry, perhaps forgetful of the things we have to be grateful for, I think, Cecil's drawings are a reminder that we still have a heart, in all its various forms of emotions. Cecil draws when her heart feels empty, sad, angry, doubting, happy, or even just to fill up spare time. Not because she has to make artworks. I commend Cecil's way of working that diligently expresses the turbulence of emotions, recording them. Whether this diligence is intentional or not, for sure, in my view, these drawings may represent many people's emotional conditions, as they do for me. Even if she suddenly stops, she will take this lightly. Because of this, in some of her drawings, there would be impressions of being unfinished. I think this is a characteristic of Cecil's aesthetic.

Jakarta, June 2023
(let's call them) K

[ARC]
Cecil's drawings are located in an unknown place, the figures or forms are often nameless, many times it's unclear what kind of creatures they are – though we may recognize some of them as human figures. Parts of bodies stack up, strands of hair falling here and there, they seem to be moving... Wait, wait. Before we discuss drawing by drawing, perhaps we may start from drawing as an act that Cecil chooses. There is an immediacy in drawing that seems to comfort Cecil.In the process, Cecil's interest in materials also pushes her to draw– her fondness of texture and colour of the boards that she uses for the work *silver shadow series* (2022) and *yellow shadow series* (2022) that are displayed in the gallery, for instance. Also the transparency of the ink, the blurriness of the pastel, the intensity of charcoal... The grace in controlling her drawing equipment often fools us into thinking that they're something else. I'm often curious, what does she use here?

In the work *grieving path series 2: Dear, Amygdala* (2023), for instance, briefly I thought it was pencil, but it turns out that Cecil uses black ink mixed with water so the colour has a grey tone that veers towards being transparent. We almost thought that the work of coastal *kinesthesia* (2023) was drawn using markers, and it turns out to be ink. This is also the case with the works that have elements of yellow and pink (but really, magenta) that we thought was watercolour, which turn out to be ink.

[GRS]
The parts that Chita refers to as "I thought" is really interesting for me as I don't have a drawing practice – yes, yes I agree that everyone can draw, but that doesn't necessarily mean that it becomes a practice, let alone a skill that becomes embodied in everyone, does it? Hehe.

[ARC]
Right? Cecil's drawings remind me of doodles that I often do when I'm in moments of contemplation. It gets me thinking about how difficult it must be to really draw without planning has done. Many draw with a blueprint or a clear goal in mind, so they could be right or wrong, finished or unfinished. When we're talking about an artist's practice, we're often tempted to compartmentalise it into'phases' or periods... Whereas, Cecil can return to a drawing that she once attempted to finish with such ease - or perhaps more accurately, she stopped working on it - then she added a few elements, before moving on to another drawing, or to start a completely new drawing with a different medium. Everything happens at the same time. To be able to draw like Cecil, there is a sensitivity that is needed, that must come from an experience of a lifetime of drawing, and certainly not many are able to achieve this.

[GRS]
In this exhibition there are two drawings that tend to be different because of the medium. In terms of approach, of making, both are still drawings. The first is drawing that Cecil made on plasterboard and the second, the print work. *Weeping in plain public* (2020) was drawn at Pasar Seni Ancol in front of an audience weekend-ing on the hot, northern coastal part of Jakarta. In the beginning, there was a member of the audience who kept asking Cecil, "What is the meaning behind your work?" Cecil asked in return, "What do you think it means?" Meaning, intention, story-telling, is never a starting point for Cecil's drawing practice – in writing titles, or when she is asked to give some sort of narrative about her work, her stance is usually retroactive, she becomes an audience of her own work, then building a story from what is visible and what is also entwined with her experience during the making of the drawing.

From this event, and the fact that Cecil hangs her work in her house, after which she brought them to the gallery, I'd like to underline the lightness and grace of Cecil's approach to drawing. Routine, yes. Ritual(istic), yes. But not necessarily in solitude. The lithography process allows Cecil to draw in the way she usually draws, with various charcoal, ink and brushes, alongside her way of creating lines with these tools–the difference being that for limestone in lithography, the drawing tools are oil based. In her notes for this work, Cecil thanked Devi Febrianto, Johana Dewa, tim studio Defto Printmaking, Ening Nurjanah, dan Goenawan Mohamad. The first three allowed the possibility of printmaking work that goes beyond someone's physical labour on top of paper. The last two, Ening and GM, facilitated other necessities that Cecil needed in order to experiment with this new medium.

From a technical perspective, *dark at the rim of language* (2023) began from work that was similar to Cecil's drawing practice. The difference is, there needs to be limestone, its drawing tools, and the print machine. So, even though the drawings are made in a process that has become so embodied in Cecil– as she has drawn since she was young–the rituals are different. If usually Cecil pores over paper, getting drawing tools that she wants to use or what to experiment with, finding a table to draw, immersed in her own company, this, aside from

when she was drawing, all the steps needed the role of other people. In Cecil's other work, as a graphic designer, as a lecturer, as an organiser, she is used to working with many people. The lithography work can be seen as an event when Cecil continues as she usually does with the way she draws with other people, along with their responses to the work.

a short note for friend C

i'm truly happy with you that your exhibition approaching

the last time we talked, just us
everything was choked up, crammed
just as the traffic jam that entrapped us that afternoon

'where do you feel most relieved?' i asked
'when i can draw.' you replied

i'm truly happy with you that your exhibition is approaching
may your space continue to broaden, you thoughts at ease

Berlin, June 2023
Lisabona Rahman

Kolofon

Perancang
M Ilham Samudra

Penerjemah (ID > EN)
Mitha Budhyarto

Pengelola Pameran
Akmalia Rizqita "Chita", Marsilam Sun Lukas

Pemasang Karya
This/Play

Pengelola Katalog
Rahmanni Fitri

Penerbit
Rubanah Underground Hub,
2023

Colophon

Designer
M Ilham Samudra

Translator (ID > EN)
Mitha Budhyarto

Exhibition Coordinators
Akmalia Rizqita "Chita", Marsilam Sun Lukas

Art Handlers
This/Play

Catalog Coordinator
Rahmanni Fitri

Publisher
Rubanah Underground Hub,
2023

Organizer
PROJECTBY9

© 2019 Rubanah
All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted

in any form or by any means, including photo-copying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

RUBANAH Underground Hub
Wisma Geha Basement
Jl. Timor No. 25, Menteng,
Jakarta Pusat 10350

www.rubanahundergroundhub.art

2023